POLICY BULLETIN CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

FDCH 05-06 May 8, 2006

SUBJECT: Duration of Free and Reduced Price Meal Eligibility

Determinations

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The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (the Reauthorization Act) modified requirements for the duration of applications for free or reduced price meals in child and adult nutrition programs authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as well as requirements related to reporting changes in income during the period of eligibility covered by the application. The purpose of this Policy Bulletin is to provide guidance on the impact of these modifications on the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

In accordance with the Reauthorization Act, households are no longer required to report changes in circumstances, such as an increase in income (currently \$50 per month, or \$600 annually), a decrease in household size or when the household is no longer certified eligible for food stamps or the Family Employment Program (FEP). Therefore, effective immediately, once properly approved for free or reduced price benefits, a household will remain eligible for those benefits for a period not to exceed 12 months.

However, if a household reports an income of zero ("0"), approval for free meals is temporary and must be checked in 90 days. If at that time the household reports an income, it must be noted on the Income Eligibility Form (IEF), dated, initialed, and the source of information identified. The institution may instead choose to have the household complete a new IEF.

(CACFP 781)